

News

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FOR RELEASE:

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AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGES IN MISSOURI: THIRD QUARTER 2004

Jackson County records fastest wage growth; St. Louis City has highest average weekly wage

In the third quarter of 2004 the average weekly wage in Jackson County rose by 4.6 percent over the year, the largest increase in Missouri among those counties and independent cities with employment of 75,000 or more. Clay County closely followed Jackson with a 4.5-percent wage increase. St. Louis City had the highest average weekly wage level in Missouri at \$811. Regional Commissioner Stanley W. Suchman noted that among Missouri's six large counties and St. Louis City, five of these exhibited rates of growth close to or above the national average of 4.0 percent, though only three had wages above the national level of \$733.

Wage levels

St. Louis City had the highest average weekly wage (\$811) in Missouri in the third quarter 2004. St. Louis and Jackson Counties followed at \$778 and \$757, respectively. (See table 1.) St. Louis City's average weekly wage was 10.6 percent above the national average, ranking 61st among the 317 largest counties in the nation, while St. Louis County's wage ranked 81st and Jackson County's, 98th. Clay County was a bit below the national average at \$698 (152nd), followed by St. Charles at \$644 (225th). Average weekly wages in the two remaining counties ranked in the bottom fifth nationwide—Greene, at \$591 (281st), and Boone, at \$585 (289th). Overall, Missouri's weekly wage was roughly 10 percent lower than the national average and ranked 27th highest in the nation at \$655, below neighboring Illinois' which ranked 8th at \$779, slightly higher than nearby Kansas' which ranked 34th at \$620, and well above Arkansas' \$570 ranking 45th.

Among the 317 large counties in the nation, New York County, N.Y., recorded the highest average weekly wage at \$1,327 in the third quarter of 2004. Santa Clara, Calif., was second with an average weekly wage of \$1,308, followed by Washington, D.C. (\$1,207), and Arlington, Va. (\$1,196). Three of the 10 counties with the highest wages in the U.S. were located in the greater New York metropolitan area (New York, N.Y., Fairfield, Conn., and Somerset, N.J.), three others were located in or around the San Francisco area (Santa Clara, San Mateo, and San Francisco, all in California), while three more were located in or around the Washington D.C. metropolitan area (Washington, D.C., Arlington, Va., and Fairfax, Va.). Rounding out the top 10 was Suffolk County, Mass., part of the Boston metropolitan area. The lowest average weekly wage was reported in Cameron County, Texas (\$468), followed by the counties of Hidalgo, Texas (\$475), Horry, S.C. (\$487), Webb, Texas (\$496), and Yakima, Wash. (\$500).

Over-the-year wage changes

Four of Missouri's large counties (Jackson, Clay, Greene and St. Charles) and St. Louis City recorded wage growth greater than or close to the national increase of 4.0 percent in the third quarter of 2004. As mentioned, Jackson's 4.6-percent wage gain was the largest increase in the State ranking 91st in the nation and Clay's 4.5-percent gain ranked 102nd. In the remaining two counties, wage growth averaged 2.8 percent in Boone County and was particularly sluggish in St. Louis County at 1.4 percent, which ranked in the bottom tenth nationally at 292nd. At the State level, the average weekly wage increased 3.0 percent over the year, one of the slower rates of growth in the nation ranking 46th.

St. Joseph County, Ind., led the nation in average weekly wage growth with an increase of 10.4 percent. Suffolk County, Mass., was second with 9.1-percent growth, followed by the counties of Loudoun, Va. (8.4 percent), Rockingham, N.H. (8.1 percent), and Arlington, Va. (7.7 percent). Seven others experienced over-the-year declines in average weekly wages, led by Kalamazoo County, Mich. (-7.7 percent). Arapahoe County, Colo. (-7.3 percent) was next, then the counties of Somerset, N.J. (-6.9 percent) and King, Wash. (-2.4 percent). (A change in the definition of wages covered by unemployment insurance in the State of Washington contributed to the decline in King County.)

Average weekly wage data by county are compiled under the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, also known as the ES-202 program. The data are derived from reports submitted by employers subject to state and federal unemployment insurance (UI) laws. The 8.4 million employer reports cover 130.2 million full- and part-time jobs. The average weekly wage is computed by dividing the total quarterly payroll of employees covered by UI programs by the average monthly number of these employees. This number then is divided by 13, the number of weeks in a quarter. It is to be noted, therefore, that over-the-year wage changes for geographic areas may reflect shifts in the composition of employment by industry, occupation, and such other factors as hours of work. Thus, wages may vary among counties, metropolitan areas, or States for reasons other than changes in the average wage level. Data for all states, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), counties, and the nation are available on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>; however, data in QCEW press releases have been revised (see Note below) and will not match the data contained on the Bureau's Web site.

Additional statistics and other information

An annual bulletin, *Employment and Wages*, features comprehensive information by detailed industry on establishments, employment, and wages for the nation and all states. *Employment and Wages Annual Averages, 2003* is available for sale from the BLS Publications Sales Center, P.O. Box 2145, Chicago, Illinois 60690, telephone 312-353-1880. The bulletin is now available in a portable document format (PDF) on the BLS Web site at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/cewbultn03.htm>. Also, the quarterly press release, County Employment and Wages, presents employment and wage data for the largest counties in the U.S. and is available at <http://www.bls.gov/cew/>.

For personal assistance or further information on the Quarterly Covered Employment and Wages Survey, as well as other Bureau programs, contact the Kansas City Information Office at 816-426-2481 from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. CT.

Information in this release will be made available to sensory impaired individuals upon request. Voice phone: 202-691-5200; TDD message referral phone number: 1-800-877-8339.

Average Weekly Wages in Missouri, Third Quarter 2004 (continued)

NOTE

QCEW data are the sums of individual establishment records reflecting the number of establishments that exist in a county or industry at a point in time. For this reason, county and industry data are not designed to be used as a time series.

Also, the preliminary QCEW data presented in this release may differ from data released by the individual states as well as from the data presented on the BLS Web site. The potential differences result from several causes. Differences between BLS and State published data may be due to the continuing receipt, review and editing of UI data over time. On the other hand, differences between data in this release and the data found on the BLS Web site are the result of adjustments made to improve over-the-year comparisons. Specifically, these adjustments account for administrative (noneconomic) changes such as a correction to a previously reported location or industry classification. Adjusting for these administrative changes allows users to more accurately assess changes of an economic nature (such as a firm moving from one county to another or changing its primary economic activity) over a 12-month period. Currently, adjusted data are available only from BLS press releases.

Table 1. Covered (1) employment and wages in the United States and the 6 largest counties and St. Louis City in Missouri, third quarter 2004 (2)

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2004 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, 2003-04 (4)	National ranking by percent change
United States (5)....	130,248.9	\$733	—	4.0	—
Missouri.....	2,656.2	655	27	3.0	46
Boone, MO.....	78.2	585	289	2.8	235
Clay, MO.....	86.9	698	152	4.5	102
Greene, MO.....	146.2	591	281	4.2	120
Jackson, MO.....	363.3	757	98	4.6	91
St. Charles, MO....	114.9	644	225	3.9	147
St. Louis, MO.....	617.5	778	81	1.4	292
St. Louis City, MO.	224.8	811	61	4.0	138

1/ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

2/ Data are preliminary.

3/ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

4/ Percent changes were computed from quarterly employment and pay data adjusted for any noneconomic county reclassifications.

5/ Totals for the United States do not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.

Table 2. Covered (1) employment and wages by state, third quarter 2004 (2)

Area	Employment	Average weekly wage (3)			
	September 2004 (thousands)	Average weekly wage	National ranking by level	Percent change, 2003-04	National ranking by percent change
United States (4).....	130,248.9	\$733	-	4.0	-
Alabama.....	1,858.0	629	33	3.6	37
Alaska.....	314.2	755	13	3.4	42
Arizona.....	2,357.6	691	22	4.9	10
Arkansas.....	1,145.7	570	45	5.2	7
California.....	15,106.6	829	6	3.9	32
Colorado.....	2,163.4	752	15	1.1	50
Connecticut.....	1,642.1	917	2	5.4	5
Delaware.....	414.9	769	9	2.1	49
District of Columbia..	658.3	1,207	1	7.6	1
Florida.....	7,397.2	655	27	4.5	16
Georgia.....	3,837.8	711	19	3.8	35
Hawaii.....	585.6	676	24	4.5	16
Idaho.....	608.1	569	46	4.0	30
Illinois.....	5,747.7	779	8	3.9	32
Indiana.....	2,887.8	655	27	4.5	16
Iowa.....	1,431.8	604	37	4.1	24
Kansas.....	1,304.8	620	34	4.6	13
Kentucky.....	1,742.9	619	35	4.4	19
Louisiana.....	1,861.1	595	41	2.8	47
Maine.....	608.8	603	39	4.3	21
Maryland.....	2,479.5	795	7	4.2	23
Massachusetts.....	3,156.5	907	3	5.5	4
Michigan.....	4,344.5	757	10	3.4	42
Minnesota.....	2,629.9	753	14	3.2	44
Mississippi.....	1,113.8	540	49	3.6	37
Missouri.....	2,656.2	655	27	3.0	46
Montana.....	413.0	525	51	3.6	37
Nebraska.....	887.4	601	40	3.6	37
Nevada.....	1,168.5	703	21	4.1	24
New Hampshire.....	622.6	731	16	6.1	2
New Jersey.....	3,918.8	876	5	2.8	47
New Mexico.....	769.3	588	43	4.1	24
New York.....	8,307.9	891	4	5.3	6
North Carolina.....	3,814.9	654	30	4.1	24
North Dakota.....	327.2	548	48	4.0	30
Ohio.....	5,333.0	685	23	4.1	24
Oklahoma.....	1,435.7	581	44	3.9	32
Oregon.....	1,627.6	676	24	3.7	36
Pennsylvania.....	5,531.4	722	17	4.3	21
Rhode Island.....	484.6	708	20	4.6	13
South Carolina.....	1,799.2	604	37	4.1	24
South Dakota.....	375.5	538	50	4.9	10
Tennessee.....	2,668.6	659	26	4.4	19
Texas.....	9,357.6	719	18	3.6	37
Utah.....	1,084.4	607	36	3.2	44
Vermont.....	302.0	634	32	5.8	3
Virginia.....	3,522.7	757	10	4.6	13
Washington.....	2,749.9	756	12	0.4	51
West Virginia.....	693.1	559	47	5.1	8
Wisconsin.....	2,745.6	653	31	4.8	12
Wyoming.....	253.6	590	42	5.0	9

1/ Includes workers covered by Unemployment Insurance (UI) and Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) programs.

2/ Data are preliminary.

3/ Average weekly wages were calculated using unrounded data.

4/ Totals for the United States do not include Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands.